Unemployment rate at 3.9%

Media Release

Released 19/05/2022

Source: Labour Force, Australia, April 2022

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for April 2022 was 3.9 per cent, according to data released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Bjorn Jarvis, head of labour statistics at the ABS, said: "In April, we saw employment rise by 4,000 people and unemployment fall by 11,000 people. As a result, the unemployment rate decreased slightly in April, though remained level, in rounded terms, with the revised March rate of 3.9 per cent.

"3.9 per cent is the lowest the unemployment rate has been in the monthly survey. The last time the unemployment rate was lower than this was in August 1974, when the survey was quarterly."

The unemployment rate for males fell by 0.2 percentage points to 4.0 per cent, its lowest level since October 2008. For females, it remained at 3.7 per cent for a second month, which is the lowest it has been since May 1974.

The participation rate also decreased in April, down by 0.1 percentage points to 66.3 per cent, but remained close to the historical highs in February and March.

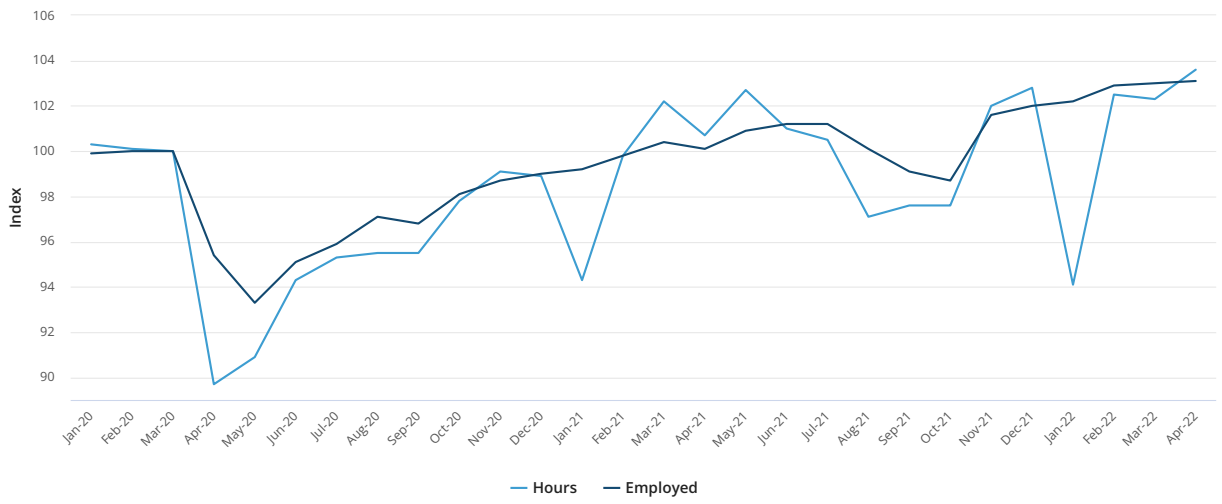
Employment and hours worked

Employment increased by 4,000 people in April, the sixth consecutive monthly rise.

The employment to population ratio remained at 63.8 per cent for a third month, the highest it has been and 1.4 percentage points higher than March 2020.

Seasonally adjusted hours worked increased by 1.3 per cent in April, largely reflecting a bounce back from the March falls in flood affected areas.

Seasonally adjusted employment and hours worked, indexed to March



Source: Labour Force, Australia Tables 1 and 19

“Hours in New South Wales and Queensland increased in April following the impacts of the floods in March. The number of people working fewer hours than usual due to bad weather dropped from its March peak of over 500,000 to around 70,000 people in April,” Mr Jarvis said.

In line with rising numbers of COVID-19 cases in April, the number of people working reduced hours due to illness continued to be high, reflecting ongoing disruption associated with the Omicron variant.

“Around 740,000 people worked reduced hours in April because of illness, almost double what we usually saw in April before the pandemic. Of these people, around 340,000 worked no hours, which was around triple what we would usually see.”

Underemployment and underutilisation

The underemployment rate fell 0.2 percentage points to 6.1 per cent and the

underutilisation rate, which combines the unemployment and underemployment rates, decreased 0.3 percentage points to 10.0 per cent. These were at their lowest levels since 2008.

Today's release includes additional analysis of hours worked and historical charts showing data back to 1966.

Further information, including regional labour market information, will be available in the upcoming April 2022 issue of Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, due for release on Thursday 26 May 2022.

The ABS would like to thank Australians for their continued support in responding to our surveys during such a difficult time.

Media notes

- The April survey reference period was from 3 April to 16 April 2022. The May survey reference period is from 1 May to 14 May 2022.
- Revisions to March data are the result of the Annual Series Review of Labour Force series. This is a regular annual process undertaken by ABS, for further information see the Seasonal adjustment and trend estimates section (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release#survey-impacts-and-changes) .
- The numbers in the media release are rounded to the nearest thousand people. For more detailed numbers see the data downloads tab in the Labour Force, Australia publication.
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